

STATEMENT OF SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION BROCK ADAMS BEFORE THE SENATE
COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS, SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOUSING
AND URBAN AFFAIRS, CONCERNING THE URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM
JULY 18, 1979

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE:

I AM VERY PLEASED TO BE HERE THIS AFTERNOON TO DISCUSS WITH YOU OUR
PLANS FOR INCREASING FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FOR PUBLIC TRANSIT AS A PART OF
THE PRESIDENT'S ENERGY PROGRAM.

THIS HEARING COMES AT AN ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT TIME FOR THE COUNTRY.
PRESIDENT CARTER, AS HE ADDRESSED THE NATION ON SUNDAY EVENING AND AS HE
HAS SPELLED OUT HIS PROPOSALS IN THE LAST TWO DAYS, HAS PRESENTED CLEARLY
THE CHALLENGE WHICH FACES US. AS A NATION, AS A GOVERNMENT AND AS
INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS, WE MUST UNDERSTAND THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE PROBLEMS
THAT CONFRONT US. AND WE MUST RESPOND EFFECTIVELY AND AFFIRMATIVELY.
WE CANNOT CONTINUE TO DRIFT INTO EVER-INCREASING DEPENDENCY ON FOREIGN
ENERGY SUPPLIES. WE CANNOT TAKE THE ATTITUDE THAT THE PROBLEMS ARE TOO
BIG FOR US OR THAT THEY ARE INCAPABLE OF SOLUTION. WE MUST MOVE FORWARD,
WITH CONFIDENCE THAT THE RESOURCES AND RESOURCEFULNESS OF THIS GREAT
NATION CAN RETURN TO US THE CONTROL OVER OUR OWN LIVES AND OUR FUTURE.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE WAS ONE OF CHALLENGE AND OF HOPE. I BELIEVE
THAT WE ARE ON THE THRESHOLD OF A NEW ERA IN AMERICAN LIFE. AND I
BELIEVE THAT MASS TRANSPORTATION WILL PLAY A FAR GREATER ROLE IN THIS
NEW ERA THAN IT HAS IN THE LAST SEVERAL DECADES. THE PRESIDENT HAS
INDICATED THAT INCREASED SUPPORT FOR TRANSIT, INCLUDING CARPOOLING AND
OTHER MEANS OF RIDESHARING, WILL BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF HIS PROGRAM TO
ACHIEVE A MEANINGFUL REDUCTION IN ENERGY CONSUMPTION AND, ULTIMATELY,
ENERGY SELF-SUFFICIENCY. THIS IS AN EXCITING PROSPECT AND ONE WHICH WE
AT THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION WELCOME WHOLEHEARTEDLY.

TRANSPORTATION NOW CONSUMES MORE THAN ONE-HALF OF THE PETROLEUM USED IN THE UNITED STATES. THIS CONSUMPTION LEVEL REQUIRES THAT WE MAKE SURE THAT OUR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS, AND OUR FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS, CONTRIBUTE TO OUR EFFORTS TO CONSERVE ENERGY RATHER THAN DRAINING OUR RESOURCES.

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF TRANSPORTATION-RELATED ENERGY SAVING MEASURES WHICH CAN BE USED TO SHAPE THE RESPONSIVENESS OF OUR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS TO THE BROADER ISSUES WE CONFRONT TODAY -- PARTICULARLY URBAN GROWTH AND REVITALIZATION. THESE MEASURES MAKE GOOD TRANSPORTATION SENSE, GOOD ENERGY SENSE, AND GOOD ECONOMIC SENSE. WE WILL BE CALLING ON OUR CITIZENS TO CHANGE THEIR TRANSPORTATION PATTERNS TO ACHIEVE BOTH SHORT AND LONG TERM REDUCTIONS IN ENERGY USE. TO DO THIS IN WAYS THAT MAINTAIN THE MOBILITY THAT IS SO VITAL TO OUR NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY WILL REQUIRE A MAJOR INCREASE IN THE ALTERNATIVES THAT ARE AVAILABLE TO CHANGE THE SINGLE-CAR, SINGLE-OCCUPANT HABITS OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC.

SHIFTS FROM THESE HABITS ARE ALREADY OCCURRING. IT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY CLEAR THAT BOTH FINANCIAL AND ENERGY CONCERNS ARE CAUSING A CHANGE IN AMERICAN LIFESTYLE. WE ARE SEEING DECREASES IN VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED, IN GASOLINE SALES AND IN DISCRETIONARY TRAVEL. AND WE ARE SEEING AN INCREASE IN THE USE OF BICYCLES, MOPEDS, AND WALKING; AN INCREASE IN CARPOOLING AND VANPOOLING; AND MOST IMPORTANTLY AN INCREASE IN TRANSIT RIDERSHIP.

THIS TRANSIT RIDERSHIP INCREASE IS NOT JUST A RESULT OF THE RECENT SHORTAGES. RIDERSHIP HAS BEEN UP 5% OVER THE PREVIOUS YEAR FOR A NUMBER OF MONTHS. WITH THE RECENT SHORTAGES RIDERSHIP HAS INCREASED DRAMATICALLY.

FOR EXAMPLE, IN LOS ANGELES, MAY STATISTICS SHOW A 24% INCREASE OVER MAY OF 1978, AND NATIONALLY, RIDERSHIP IN MAY WAS UP 7.3% OVER MAY OF 1978. FURTHERMORE, CONTRARY TO POPULAR BELIEF, A SUBSTANTIAL PERCENTAGE OF RIDERSHIP RESULTING FROM CRISES -- SUCH AS THE 1974 OIL EMBARGO, THE STORMS OF LAST WINTER, AND THE RECENT SHORTAGES -- IS RETAINED BY TRANSIT.

HOWEVER, MANY PEOPLE WHO RECENTLY TURNED TO PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THEIR PRIVATE CARS FOUND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS OVERCROWDED AND STRAINING TO ACCOMMODATE THE MANY NEW RIDERS. IF WE ARE TO PROVIDE THE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICE THE PEOPLE EXPECT AND MUST HAVE IN ORDER TO PREVENT SEVERE NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DISLOCATIONS, TRANSIT FACILITIES MUST BE ABLE TO ACCOMMODATE THE NEW DEMAND BY PROVIDING THE FLEXIBILITY AND FREQUENCY WHICH WILL MAKE THE TRANSITION FROM THE SINGLE OCCUPANT AUTO MORE ACCEPTABLE.

AS THE PRESIDENT'S ENERGY PROPOSAL INDICATES, THIS WILL TAKE MONEY -- MORE MONEY THAN WE CURRENTLY HAVE BUDGETED -- AND A MORE LONG TERM VIEW OF TRANSIT. THE PRESIDENT THEREFORE HAS PROPOSED SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN TRANSIT FUNDING AS PART OF THE ENERGY PROGRAM AND HAS URGED OFFICIALS AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT TO PROMOTE THE USE OF TRANSIT. SINCE ENACTMENT OF THE URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ACT OF 1964, WE HAVE MADE CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS IN PRESERVING AND UPGRADING WOEFULLY DETERIORATED PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS. HOWEVER, TODAY'S REALITIES ARE A GRAPHIC DEMONSTRATION OF HOW MUCH WE MUST YET ACCOMPLISH TO MEET THE CHALLENGE POSED BY OUR NATIONAL GOAL TO FREE THE U.S. FROM ITS DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN OIL.

BY IMPROVING THE RELIABILITY AND EXPANDING THE CAPACITY OF OUR TRANSIT SYSTEMS, IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO ACCOMMODATE A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO CURRENTLY USE AUTOMOBILES FOR COMMUTING TO WORK DURING PEAK HOURS AND TO PROVIDE THE CAPACITY FOR SUBSTANTIAL SHIFTS TO PUBLIC TRANSIT FOR OFF-PEAK PERSONAL TRAVEL. THIS WILL BOTH SAVE ENERGY DIRECTLY AND IMMEDIATELY, AND FOSTER SHIFTS IN LAND USES AND INVESTMENTS TO PATTERNS WHICH WILL BE MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT FOR THE FUTURE. IT WILL ALSO GIVE OUR CITIZENS A REALISTIC WAY TO AVOID SPENDING EVER-INCREASING AMOUNTS OF THEIR INCOME ON GASOLINE FOR THEIR CARS.

LET ME GIVE YOU SOME SPECIFIC FIGURES:

AT PRESENT THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 52,000 BUSES OPERATED IN URBAN TRANSIT SERVICE.

BY MAINTAINING THE PRESENT BUS FLEET AND PRESENT LEVEL OF TOTAL BUS MILES PER YEAR AND TRIPLING THE AVERAGE BUS OCCUPANCY FROM 12 TO 36 PASSENGERS, 140,000 BARRELS OF FUEL PER DAY CAN BE SAVED.

IN OTHER WORDS, USING CURRENTLY AVAILABLE RESOURCES MORE EFFICIENTLY WILL ACHIEVE SIGNIFICANT CONSUMPTION REDUCTIONS IN FUEL.

AS I MENTIONED EARLIER MANY SYSTEMS HAVE EXPERIENCED INCREASES IN RIDERSHIP IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS. WE ARE JUST NOW BEGINNING TO COLLECT DATA THAT WE CAN USE TO SUBSTANTIATE OUR ESTIMATES OF SAVINGS AND WE INTEND TO CONTINUE TO MONITOR CHANGES OCCURRING NATIONWIDE.

IF WE TOOK THE NEXT STEP AND INCREASED TRANSIT CAPACITY BY 50% BY 1990 WE COULD SAVE ANOTHER 200,000 BARRELS PER DAY.

TO ACCOMPLISH THIS LEVEL OF SAVINGS, WE MUST ACCELERATE OUR TRANSIT PROGRAM INVESTMENTS SO THAT WE CAN PROVIDE INCREASED BUS, RAIL AND RELATED TRANSIT SERVICE.

THE PRESIDENT PROPOSED TO MAKE \$10 BILLION AVAILABLE - ONE BILLION PER YEAR - FROM THE REVENUES OF THE ENERGY SECURITY TRUST FUND FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION. WE INTEND TO ADAPT THE EXISTING CAPITAL PROGRAMS OF UMTA TO FASHION A PROGRAM THAT WILL RESPOND FLEXIBLY TO OUR NEEDS TO INCREASE FUEL EFFICIENCY AND DECREASE OUR DEPENDENCY ON FOREIGN OIL. THIS ADDED FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FOR TRANSIT CAPITAL, PLANT, AND EQUIPMENT WILL MODERNIZE AND EXPAND OUR TRANSIT SYSTEMS AND ACCELERATE COMPLETION OF NEW SYSTEMS ALREADY STARTED.

OBVIOUSLY, MR. CHAIRMAN, THIS ALL DEPENDS ON CONGRESS ENACTING THE WINDFALL PROFITS TAX AND ESTABLISHING THE ENERGY SECURITY TRUST FUND. I AM CONFIDENT THIS WILL BE DONE. WE ARE DEVELOPING LEGISLATION WHICH WILL DETAIL THE USES OF THESE NEW FUNDS, WHICH WE HOPE TO HAVE TO THE CONGRESS BEFORE THE RECESS.

THE ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR TRANSIT WILL BE MONEY WELL SPENT. THE INVESTMENTS NECESSARY TO BUILD TRANSIT CAPACITY WILL PRODUCE GEOMETRIC ENERGY SAVINGS -- AS CAPACITY INCREASES, THE ABILITY TO PROVIDE BETTER SERVICE INCREASES; AS THE ABILITY TO PROVIDE BETTER SERVICE INCREASES, RIDERSHIP INCREASES; AS RIDERSHIP INCREASES, ENERGY CONSERVATION INCREASES.

INCREASED RIDERSHIP ALSO LEADS TO FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AROUND TRANSIT STATIONS AND ALONG TRANSIT ROUTES WHICH IN TURN LEADS TO MORE RIDERSHIP AND MORE ENERGY CONSERVATION. THE ULTIMATE RESULT IS ENERGY EFFICIENT LAND USE PATTERNS, REVITALIZATION OF URBAN AREAS, A STEADILY INCREASING TRANSIT CONSTITUENCY AND A STEADILY DECREASING USE OF THE SINGLE-OCCUPANT PRIVATE VEHICLE.

MR. CHAIRMAN, THE PROGRAM I HAVE OUTLINED IS AMBITIOUS. BUT IT IS COMMENSURATE WITH THE CHALLENGES OUTLINED BY THE PRESIDENT. AS THE PRESIDENT SAID SUNDAY NIGHT, WE ARE ENGAGED IN A STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM. WE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ARE COMMITTED TO WINNING THAT STRUGGLE. I KNOW WE WILL HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THIS COMMITTEE IN OUR EFFORTS.

THAT CONCLUDES MY PREPARED STATEMENT. MY COLLEAGUES AND I WOULD BE PLEASED TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE.